



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20314-1000

SEP 21 2012

CECW-CO-N

MEMORANDUM FOR CHIEFS, OPERATIONS DIVISIONS, MAJOR SUBORDINATE
COMMANDS AND DISTRICT COMMANDS

SUBJECT: Visitation Estimation and Reporting System (VERS) Modernization Update

1. Efforts to improve the Corps of Engineers Visitation Estimation and Reporting System (VERS) are advancing along a number of fronts. We have just completed the first of two years of peak-season visitor surveys (www.CorpsLakes.us/VisitorSurvey), the results of which will be used to update the load-factors needed for estimating visitation from our monthly traffic meter counts. Additionally, the first round of field evaluations of traffic meter locations has been incorporated into a Google-Earth-based geospatial data platform; allowing us to see where visitor traffic is being monitored at our recreation areas. This platform will allow for the transparent visualization of all meter locations across the country.
2. Fiscal Year 2013 (FY13) begins the transition period for the new VERS framework for the nation (<http://corpslakes.usace.army.mil/employees/usurveys/pdfs/12Sep12-VERSMoDEffort.pdf>). A fundamental element of the VERS structure is the newly defined Project Site Areas (PSAs) designations in the Operations and Management Business Information Link (OMBIL). All designated PSAs with vehicular access should be metered. Due to the PSA changes, a field review and corrective action in the placement of traffic counters is required.
3. National VERS Coach, Assist Training Team (VERS-CATT) members will be trained in September 2012, in Meter Placement Best Practices. Meter location placement may require adjustment based on revised PSAs definitions or previously incorrect placement. These adjustments are to be made by trained field staff in compliance with best practices. This review and meter placement will be conducted and completed by December 2012, to allow meter readings to begin January 2013. Documentation of meter changes will be made in 2013.
4. A number of other changes will occur during FY13. Changes to the physical meter locations made in 2012, will require a CATT and field review of the national Google-Earth data platform in early 2013. Surveys will continue in 2013 in both peak and spring and fall shoulder seasons. The current web-VERS software used by projects to report monthly meter readings will go offline at the end of the FY12 reporting cycle. A SharePoint site will be developed and used for the collection of new traffic meter reading numbers, beginning October 2012 to reflect the new OMBIL PSAs definitions.
5. Until the new load-factors from 2012 and 2013 data are available, no automated visitation reports will be produced during the conversion (from Oct 2012-Dec 2013).

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FY 13 visitation reporting utilizing the survey results and meter readings will be developed in early FY14. Additional surveys in 2014 and 2015 are anticipated to improve use estimates and allow for unique characteristics of areas not included in the previous sampling.

6. The point of contact for this activity at ERDC is Dr. Kathleen Perales, (601) 831-4353 or at headquarters CECW-CO-N, Mr. Pep Persio, (202) 761-0036.

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